Metropolitan Offices
1441 Drummond Street
Telephone 849-5331

Montréal Communiqué

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JUNE 7, 1969--Yesterday was the 125th anniversary of the founding of the YMCA in London, England, during the chaotic days of the industrial revolution, just one century before the D-Day invasion of France.

"We were reluctant to risk detracting from this historic turning point in World War II, and permitted the birthdate of our Association to pass without fanfare," commented R.G. Rogers, General Secretary of the Montreal YMCA.

The Montreal YMCA, founded in 1851, just seven years after the Association was organized in England by George Williams, is the first YMCA on this continent.

Celebrations to mark the 125th anniversary have been scheduled for June 19-21, when thousands of representatives from all of the 86 different countries in which the YMCA operates will meet in St. Louis, Miss.

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"We will be participating in that convention and, in addition, hope that a great-grandson of Sir George Williams, John Smith, a Liberal member of the British Parliament, may be visiting us later this month," said Mr. Rogers.

Mr. Rogers noted that the Montreal YMCA started as an evangelical organization. As it evolved and matured, its range of concerns expanded to take in social and physical needs of people.

It was in answer to previously neglected needs that the Y became a pioneer in the fields of self-development, recreation, education and physical education.

Today, along with physical fitness programs for all ages, the principal emphases of the Association are on character-development, the preparation of pre-teens for adolescence and teenagers for maturity, the generation gap, human rights and a front-line confrontation with social and community problems of the times.

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New ways are being developed to help clarify and strengthen family relations, and more programs evolved to foster communication and co-operation between Quebec's two main language groups.

Work with immigrants and people in underprivileged areas is also being expanded, as are activities in the community and counselling for all ages on personal, vocational and family problems.

The Y also operates a number of world service programs which concentrate on helping people in emerging nations to identify and meet their objectives.

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For further information please contact: Bill Sher,
849-5331.